

Megan Columbus: Thank you for joining this session. We're really excited to present Navigating NIH Programs. This is a session designed to give you an overview of what NIH has to offer in terms of types of funding. I have with me today, Dr. Ericka Boone. Ericka is the acting director of the Division of Biomedical Research Workforce in NIH's Office of Extramural Research. Welcome, Ericka. We're going to actually be doing a short pre-recorded presentation that's something like 25 minutes long. So you're going to see in the written Q and As that Ericka is going to be answering questions along with me, and we have some support of some other folks who'll be answering questions as well. So join me as we look at the video, and then we're going to come back live and I will be posing questions from a chat for Dr. Boone to take live. Thanks so much.

Dr. Ericka Boone: We are going to take a few moments today to talk about navigating NIH programs to advance your career at NIH. So this session is geared more so towards those individuals that are newer to the world, policies and programs of the NIH. I'm going to give you a high level overview of what NIH is, the types of funding programs that are available and give some resources and tips on how to find information and stay abreast of the latest policies and programs relevant to the NIH. So of course, you all know who we are. Founded in 1880, NIH is the primary agency of the United States Government responsible for biomedical and public health research, and it's the largest public funder biomedical research in the world. We have in 2020 an operating budget of a little more than \$40 billion, approximately a little under 5 percent was devoted to research training and career development awards, and almost 55 percent went towards funding research project grants. In total, NIH funded more than 60,000 grants in FY '21. There are, of course, 27 different institutes and centers at NIH, and you can see that I have circled on the top left the Office of Extramural Research, including the Division of Biomedical Research Workforce, where I am located. Now, while there is one NIH, there are 27 different cultures. We have 27 different institutes and centers. Each IC has its own mission, its own budget, its own activities, its own way of doing business. So how do you figure out where to start? Well, I'm going to give you some advice. You start with interacting with NIH staff, and these individuals in particular: your Program Officers, your Scientific Review Officers or your Grants Management Officers. Well, maybe you're going to reach out to some of these and some of them you're not. But we'll go a little bit more in to detail in just a second. So where does the Program Officer come in to play? Well, before you submit an application, you're going to want to reach out to your Program Officer. I tend to call them your research best friend. Why? Because they have all of the relevant information that you need in order to find out the most relevant information about the current funding opportunity announcements that are currently on the street, as well as how your research priorities might fit within the research priorities within that particular institute and center. So how might you want to interact with your Program Officer? Well, one, you might want to send them an e-mail. Introduce yourself. Send them what we're calling a concept paper, right? Really it's just a few paragraphs about your research, about your priorities, your specific aims, and then ask for a time and date to speak with them, right? So also, after you submit an application and your reviews come back, if

you didn't get funded you might be a little upset, right? So you're going to want to be able to respond to your review, and the best way to do that is to connect with your Program Officer. So who's a Scientific Review Officer? These individuals, after an application is assigned to a review committee, helps to usher these applications to a review committee. They help to identify any missing information. They can give you supplementary, or provide any supplementary information, et cetera. The Grants Management Officer, you might want to understand the role of the Grants Management Officer before, as well as after, you submit an application. These individuals have lots of relevant information with regards to an NIH grants policies, about budgets, about what to do if you're changing your institution, so on and so forth. Also, we want . . . you might want to utilize these resources to find the right IC and the right Program Officers to speak with. So where's the first place that you can naturally start? It's with your own mentors. Your research is probably going to be very similar to theirs, so they will probably have an idea of whom you should start to talk with right off the bat. But you can also utilize other NIH resources like the NIH RePORTER tool, NIH MATCHMAKER tool in order to be able to dig down deeper and to see the kinds of research that's funded by NIH. The PIs who are leading those research, Program Officers here at NIH that are responsible for having those applications for those awards in their portfolios. There's so much information here. You can also see which institutes across NIH are funding, different kinds of funding . . . different kinds of research, rather, that is similar to your own. Also, you're going to want to check out and review each institution and center's mission, their strategic plans and their research priorities. Spend some time on their web pages as well. You should also normalize reaching out to your Program Officers, again, so if . . . you should send them an e-mail well before the deadline. Please don't contact a Program Officer a couple weeks before you're supposed to submit an application because it's just not going to pan out very well. They're not going to be able to give you relevant information that you can utilize and go back to it and apply to your application so that you're going to be able to make that deadline. So really, start 6 months in advance, if you can. When you are contacting your Program Officer you don't need to send them your dissertation, right? So just send them a few paragraphs, as I indicated before, about your specific aims: where you are, who you are, the kinds of research that you're interested in. Also, request some times and dates in order to be able to speak with them via phone. Follow up with them as needed. Sometimes e-mails kind of get deep. We're not ignoring you. We might have . . . your e-mail just might have gotten a little bit buried. Here's some additional advice. Again, as I said before, review IC priorities and goals because the priorities and goals can differ, not only between the different ICs, but also between funding mechanisms. Learn more about the NIH application and review process. As I said before, make early contact with your Program Officers. It goes without saying to find the most innovative and well-respected mentors and collaborators to be a part of your team. Study successful grant applications. It might also be a good idea to take a look at applications that might not have been successfully funded the first or second time around so that you can kind of compare those notes. Also, propose your best and most creative ideas. And also, take a look at funding opportunity announcements that are published. In particular through grants.gov and on the NIH Guide for Grants and Contracts

website. So what are funding opportunity announcements, or FOAs? So for any application that you submit to NIH you're going to apply through a funding opportunity announcement. All federal grant funding agencies use FOAs, and basically an FOA is a publicly available document in which the federal agency makes known its intentions to award certain types of grants. FOAs may be permanent announcements, request for applications, notices of funding availability, solicitation, so on and so forth. So you have your program announcements, which highlight specific, high priority areas of scientific focus, program announcements can consist of either PAS, which has set aside funds, or PAR, which has a special receipt referral and/or review considerations. Request for applications, again, identify specific scientific areas. It also identifies an amount of set aside of funds and also identifies the anticipated number of awards. There's usually one single receipt date. So for parent announcements, again, these are broad FOAs that are allow applicants to submit investigator initiated or unsolicited research ideas to a specific activity code like, for example, R01 or an R03. They're usually ongoing and they're standard receipt dates. So those standard receipt dates give you a lot of flexibility when you can . . . so that you can decide when you'd like to apply for a particular award. So here's a good place to kind of start. Go to our research training website. Become familiar with this website. There's so much good information here on different kinds of funding opportunities across your career stages or an investigator's career stages. So now let's take a moment to get better acquainted with the funding opportunities by career phase. So this graphic does identify some of our more common opportunities. It's too exhaustive and we're not going to talk in-depth about these . . . all of these opportunities today, but I wanted to make sure that by visualizing this graphic that you got an understanding of some of our more common opportunities. So before we dig in, I want to make sure that I highlight a couple of our funding opportunities, whereby individuals are eligible to apply for a wider swath of their research career. So specifically, for this slide, I wanted to highlight diversity supplement. So the goal of the Diversity Supplement Program is to assist in diversifying the biomedical research workforce by supporting investigators from diverse and underrepresented groups who seek to develop research capabilities and participate in career development experiences. Diversity supplements may support individuals across different stages of their careers, from their undergraduate studies all the way up in to faculty positions. It can serve to be a bridge for an F or a K award. Of course, the expectation is that an individual, following their diversity supplement support time, will be able to successfully apply for additional NIH support in the future. I also want to call your attention to the NIH loan repayment program. Loan debt is recognized by many early stage investigators as one of the biggest barriers that they have to starting and continuing a research career, and this is where the NIH loan repayment program, or LRP, comes in to play. So in exchange for a 2-year commitment to perform research in what is identified in NIH mission critical research areas, NIH will commit to repaying up to \$50,000 in eligible student loan debt. And, of course, the amount that individual will receive is based on the amount of loan debt that they have. So overall the success rate for this program is at around 50 percent. It's a better success rate than any program that we have here at NIH. There are six different loan repayment programs to choose from. And how do you find out more information? You go to the website,

www.lrp.nih.gov. I want to also highlight that the LRP ... extramural LRP application deadline this year is November the 18th. So now let's talk about funding opportunities that are available for individuals at the ... from the predoc to the early postdoctoral career phase. NIH awards provide training opportunities for individuals at various stages of education and training, beginning at the baccalaureate level via predoctoral fellowships, and through the postdoctoral phase via postdoctoral fellowships and institutional training grants, as you see listed here. There are two different flavors, if you will, of an NRSA. The institutional T32s provide awards to institutions to support research training activities for graduate and/or postdoctoral trainees. And individual fellowships include the F30, the F31, Diversity F31, and F32 and we'll talk a bit more about those in just a second. There are common features of all of our NRSAs. For example, trainees and fellows are required to pursue full-time research training. That's about 40 hours a week. The NRSAs include stipends that allow an individual to defray living expenses, and stipends have increased each year since 2017. Tuition and fees are also included and this helps to contribute to defraying educational costs. There are also institutional allowances for Fs and training related expenses for Ts, and these help to defray expenses such as your health insurance, research supplies, travel to scientific meetings and more. Institutional and individual predoctoral NRSAs allow for students to engage in highly structured research projects under the guise of an experienced mentor. T32s provide awards to institutions to support research training activities for graduate and/or postdoctoral trainees. Here we're highlighting the institutional T32, which enables promising predoctoral students to obtain individualized mentored research training from outstanding faculty sponsors. The individual predoctoral F31 provides up to 5 years of support to allow predoctoral students the opportunity to obtain technical, operational, professional and research skills necessary to conduct rigorous research and transition into careers in biomedical research workforce. The F31 is also used to enhance workforce diversity through separate mechanisms. The F30 supports predoctoral fellows during clinical and graduate training, which leads to a combined doctoral degree. For example, an MD or a PhD. The diversity F31 supports individuals from groups that are underrepresented in the biomedical and behavioral sciences. And lastly, the F32 supports highly promising applicants during their mentored postdoctoral training periods. Next, the NIH director's Early Independence Award allows for exceptional investigators to pursue independent research directly after the completion of their research doctorate degree or clinical residency. In essence, it allows for individuals to bypass traditional postdoctoral training and accelerate entry into an independent research career. But for those individuals that desire a bit more training and mentorship prior to launching into their independent research careers, we have career development programs for early stage investigators. But who are early stage investigators or ESIs? So ESIs are considered to be investigators that are either within 10 years of receiving their terminal research degree or most recent clinical training, whichever date is later, and have not received a substantial NIH independent research award. Listed on the slide are several types of NIH grants that an ESI can hold and maintain their ESI status, which includes the R00, the R03, R25, Fs, Ks, Ls, our loan repayment program awards and more. ESI status has its benefits. So, for example, NIH sets target numbers for funding early stage investigators, setting a higher R01 pay

line, which in essence helps to prioritize applications with meritorious scores for funding. So by doing so we're trying to ensure more parity in success rates among early-stage and established investigators, or between those. Also, during the review process, peer reviewers look more at potential than long-term track record of achievement. So they're encouraged to weigh an early-stage investigator's academic and research background and place less emphasis on the presence of preliminary data and extensive publication records as compared to more established investigators. And lastly, where feasible, new and early-stage investigator applications are reviewed separately during review. So now back to our career development, or K awards. So common features of the K awards are that they provide salary and research support for a substantial period of protected research time, between 3 and 5 years, for intensive mentor career development under the guidance of an experienced mentor. The expectation is that through this sustained period of research career development and training, awardees will be in a position to launch into an independent research career and become competitive for new research project grants, so for example, R01s. Now while we won't venture into the different sections of the application and scorable elements during this session because that will be covered in different virtual seminar sessions, I will mention that important areas that an applicant must focus on within the application are related to the candidate, the research plan, and mentor, co-mentor, consulting, collaborators, research environment, and institutional commitment to the candidate. Now we'll briefly review the different types of K awards. So keep in mind, for sake of time we're not going to go into depth, but I'll focus more on the general descriptions. So for the K01, the K01 supports intensive, supervised career development experience in the biomedical or behavioral sciences, leading to research independence. Some ICs at NIH use a K01 to increase research workforce diversity or for individuals who proposed to train in a new field or those who had a hiatus from their research careers. The K08 provides protected time for individuals with clinical doctoral degrees for an intensive mentored research career development experience to conduct basic to clinical, including translational types of research. The K23 supports career development of investigators who have made a commitment to pursue patient-oriented research, or POR. And by POR, I mean research conducted with human subjects or a material of human origin, such as tissue, specimen or a cognitive phenomenon for which an investigator directly interacts with human subjects. Areas of research can include mechanisms of disease, therapeutic interventions, clinical trials and development of new technologies. The K25, not listed here, supports investigators whose quantitative science and engineering research has thus far not been focused primarily on questions related to health and disease, and allows for these individuals with more quantitative backgrounds, for example, mathematics, imaging sciences, informatics, economics, et cetera, to engage in course work, seminars, mentored, basic or clinical research opportunities. I will describe the K99, R00 in just a second. But before I do that, I want to show you on this slide that there are, if you will, are three different kind of types, or flavors, of mentor K awards. So, for example, there are those that, one, are designed specifically for applicants proposing to serve as the lead investigator of an independent clinical trial. A clinical trial feasibility study, or a separate ancillary clinical trial, is part of their research and career

development. Or, two, those types of Ks that are designed specifically for applicants proposing research that does not involve leading an independent clinical trial. A clinical trial feasibility study, or an ancillary clinical trial. Applications for these FOAs are permitted to propose research experience in a clinical trial led by a mentor or a co-mentor. And lastly are those supporting basis science experimental studies involving humans or MeSH. Make sure that you are reading the FOAs thoroughly to make sure that you are applying for the right or under the right FOA. NIH also provides institutional career development awards that are designed to prepare newly trained clinicians who've made a commit to independent research careers and to facilitate their transition to more advanced support mechanisms. For example, the K08 or the K23 mentored K awards. So these awards can be specific according to NIH ICs. However, the FOAs have all relevant information within those applications for consideration, so make sure that you are, again, reading the FOA. I'm sure that you've all heard of the K99/R00, which was launched back in 2007. The goal of this program is to facilitate a timely transition from a mentored postdoctoral phase to an independent research position that includes, or with, NIH research funding support. The K99/R00 is a phased award, and the first phase begins with a 1 to 2 years mentored K99, or postdoctoral phase, and the R00 begins once the individual starts a faculty position, and this phase can last for up to 3 years. There are different kinds or types of K99/R00 awards that NIH offers. For example, the physician scientist K99/R00, the brain K99/R00 and the MOSAIC, which I will describe in a second. Lastly, listed a bullet that some NIH ICs have published a notice that extends eligibility for submission of K99/R00 applications due to COVID-19 related disruptions. Because there remains a compelling need to develop additional strategies to promote transition to independent positions for scientists from diverse backgrounds. We have the MOSAIC K99/R00, which was implemented to foster development of creative, innovative, independent researchers who would be competitive for subsequent independent research support. The MOSAIC framework establishes the formation of cohesive and mutually supportive scholar cohorts based on scientific areas that span the K99/R00 phase and provides scholars with opportunities to engage in career development activities, which are facilitated via professional societies pictured here on the right. These activities are designed to help foster progression to, and success in, independent research careers. I wanted to take a moment to note the timeline for new K applications: February, June and October of each year. And now we'll talk a little bit more about small, early career research awards, which included the R03 and the R15. So the R03 provides limited funding, up to 2 years of support, to support a variety of types of projects, including: pilot or feasibility studies, development of new technologies, et cetera. The Academic Research Enhancement Award, or the AREA award, or R15s, provides support small-scale research projects that are conducted by faculty and students at educational institutions that don't have a long history of receiving major NIH research grant funds. The R21 encourages new, exploratory and developmental research projects by providing support for early stage investigators. It can sometimes be used for pilot and feasibility studies. Preliminary data is not necessarily required, and this R21 is limited to up to 2 years of funding. The DP2 supports highly innovative, high impact and out-of-the-box types of high impact research research in biomedical, behavioral and social sciences. There is no detailed

experimental plan or preliminary data that are required for submission of the DP2. The awards are up to \$300,000 in direct costs for each year and up to 5 years, and it's funded through the NIH Common Fund. Now for the Maximizing Investigators Research Award, or the MIRA, and the CATS awards. Both of these, again, are for early stage investigators. Both of these awards allow investigators to engage in research areas that are distinctive from their historical areas of research. Now while the proposed research can rely on prior work and a foundational expertise of the investigator, it must represent a different direction and can involve a new approach, methodology, technique or paradigm. Again, please engage with your Program Office prior to application so that you can make sure that you understand all of the rules of engagement for each of these mechanisms. And now the research project grant. In the interest of time, I will not list the plethora of funding opportunity announcements that are available, but I will highlight the R01, which is supported by most NIH institutes and centers and most investigators are the most familiar with. It provides up to 5 years of funding support. Successful R01 grant applications absolutely require the submission of preliminary data, and I want to also make sure that I caution investigators, especially early stage investigators, to contact your Program Officer prior to submitting your application. Now we're wrapping up. I promise. But here's some helpful information before we do. Anytime the NIH wants to communicate important policy updates we do so via publication of notices. Some examples of notices are listed here on this particular slide, like, for example, there are notices regarding upcoming changes to biographical sketches, the requirement of ORCID IDs, et cetera. Also make sure that you sign up for grants.gov. Here you're going to find funding opportunities for all governmental agencies, not just NIH. This web page is the central resource for information on grants, policy and more at NIH, so this is the grants and funding page that's listed here, grants.nih.gov. Make sure that you visit the grants and funding web page often. You can find important information regarding grants, policy compliance, reports, find funding opportunities, et cetera. Make sure that you're subscribing to receive weekly updates with regards to any announcements, new funding opportunity announcements, et cetera. So you're going to want to make sure that you are subscribing to the extramural net and the "Open Mike" blog. You're going to find very important information that's shared with the extramural community via these particular mechanisms. And with that I would like to say thank you for your time and attention. You can reach out and contact us at the Division of Biomedical Research Workforce if you have questions with regards to research training and career development, questions about ESI or ESI extension requests, as well as ESI policies, FAQs and podcasts are listed on our website and is listed here. Thank you so much.

Woman #1: That was lightning speed.

Woman #2: All right. We're really doing this. I put it off long enough. Hey, guys. Thanks so much for hanging out with me today. I've been watching furniture flip videos ... problem at this point. And then I just kept thinking, "Kim, you should start filming." I should have started a couple hours ago. It's fine. Whatever. Okay. So I need to get ...

Megan Columbus: Hello. Darren?

Darren I think his computer might be stuck. Hold on.

Woman #2: ... way more than what's on this ...

Darren All right. You should be good now. Sorry. We should be able go ahead with Q and A now.

Megan Columbus: Okay. So we still hear things in the background, but thank you, Ericka. That was a really helpful presentation. I don't know if you were tracking the chat, but the chat was ... people were very appreciative of what you were saying. I've been noting some questions and ... So the questions are across the board.

Ericka Boone: I've been trying to track them. I've been trying to track the chat and trying to answer questions at the same time.

Megan Columbus: Yes.

Ericka Boone: I was mostly focused on questions in the Q and A.

Megan Columbus: Yeah. And I think that's really where we are focusing, and so let people know ... so those of you who are putting questions in the chat, know that we're monitoring the Q and A more carefully. I think one thing ... Let's start with an easy one for you because you have also been the Director of Loan Repayment.

Ericka Boone: We're getting a lot of ...

Megan Columbus: We need somebody to be muted, Darren.

Woman #2: ... In the house because we're running out of space in our garage.

Megan Columbus: Darren? Ah, thank you so much. I appreciate that. Okay. So, loan repayment. Can you tell a little bit about loan repayment, especially the particular question I was looking at was whether parents' loans can count?

Ericka Boone: So for ... I'm sorry. I just kicked the dog up underneath the table. Just lightly though, sorry. Sorry. Just lightly. I didn't realize he was there. Good thing he's not whining. But yes, regarding the loan repayment program ... so many of you have heard of the loan repayment program, and it's really in place to help to recruit and retain promising investigators into biomedical research careers. There are several eligibility criteria that are associated with the loan repayment program. Now are parent plus loans eligible for repayment? The short answer to that one is no, but if you have more questions with regards to the loan repayment program in general, then reach out to them at lrp@nih.gov. And you can also check out the website at www.lrp.gov. I mean ... Yeah. Is it dot gov? Dot com.

Megan Columbus: We had a bunch of questions about what constitutes underrepresented groups: Asians, Jewish people, other ... When do you become underrepresented, and how does it help you?

Ericka Boone: I would say the short answer for that one is to remind everyone that NIH has published a notice on its interest in diversity, and within that it lays out different kind of categories with regards to what NIH would consider to be underrepresented. Also if an individual has a specific question about their background, whether it's their demographic background or whether it is disadvantaged status, so on and so forth, they should feel free to reach out to their Program Officer to inquire regarding more information.

Megan Columbus: So for F32 applicants, should the candidate or the mentor be the person who's reaching out to the program official?

Ericka Boone: We get this question a lot, who's allowed to talk to a Program Officer versus who's not allowed to talk to a Program Officer? And you can call a program .. . Not call. You can reach out and contact a Program Officer at any time. When I was a graduate student, which was really a lot of many, many, many moons ago, my mentor insisted that I would be the one to contact our Program Officer if I had any questions. There are several reasons for that. One, he wanted to get me used to the idea of calling or scheduling a time to speak with a Program Officer because my life, my research life, I was going to be .. . Well during my research career I would have communication with different kinds of program officers, so you might as well get started doing that one early. So he insisted that I do it myself. Now, of course, did I just go off and send them an e-mail on my own? No, I coordinated with my mentor and I developed the e-mail that I would send to them. He looked at it, made sure it was okay and then I sent that. But I was the one responsible for communicating with my Program Officer. So, with that being said, I would suggest that an applicant, if they're a little bit nervous about it, to first coordinate with their primary mentor first and then go ahead and reach out to their Program Officer. Also there are .. . Perhaps talk to your mentor first to see how they would prefer that you do it. Sometimes mentors prefer to reach out or to make the initial contacts with the Program Officer first, and then they usher in the applicant themselves. So talk to your mentor about it. These are kinds of conversations that you really want to have with your mentor first.

Megan Columbus: Good advice.

Ericka Boone: Long answer.

Megan Columbus: All right. How does one determine whether they should apply for an F31, like a traditional F31, versus an F31 diversity grant, if you qualify for diversity eligibility?

Ericka Boone: If you would qualify for both of them, right? This is one of .. . This is kind of like an extension of the last question really, right? This is where talking to and reaching out to your Program Officers is really very important because not only is your research area, your research background, so on and so forth, very important with regards to the decision that you're going to make, but talking to a Program Officer at the institute or center that you're interested in giving fund your award really gives you good, specific information, or you can ask them good, specific questions about not only your research, but also your eligibility criteria and what they think about that. Now, in the end, it's going to be up to you and your mentor, mostly you, to

make that decision for which one you're going to apply to. But having that conversation with your Program Officer will help to give you the information that you need in order to be able to better make that decision.

Megan Columbus: Great. Thank you so much. Tegan asks a great question, is having a faculty position a requirement for the application? Can I apply with a project scientist position?

Ericka Boone: Now that one I think that you can, right? I'm not really sure about that one. I would have to follow up on that one. Now make sure that there is the training booth, right, NIH training booth. So you want to make sure that you schedule some time to talk to a Program Officer at the institute and center in which you are interested in applying. Now there is a part in the FOA where it talks about eligible individuals and eligible institutions. You want to make sure that you check that one out. Now there are different designations for individuals that are eligible to apply for different funding opportunities. One, you kind of got to make sure you understand how that definition kind of like translates from your organization to, you know, reading that FOA because different positions might have different kind of titles that mean the exact same thing. So again, you're going to want to make sure that you make some time to speak with someone at the training booth to kind of get these specific questions answered for you. I'm looking on here too, so ..

Megan Columbus: What is the best .. I know. There's so many good questions.

Ericka Boone: There's one, when does an ESI use the fellowship format biosketch? Use a non. Use a non-fellowship format.

Megan Columbus: So what's the best way to submit as a K or directly as an R if you're a young investigator starting their career? Do you have to go for a K first or can you just jump right in?

Ericka Boone: You can jump right in if you choose. However, if you're an early career investigator and you feel you're in a position where you need additional mentorship then you should definitely be considering the K, or the career development award, that kind of pathway. Now again, there's a theme to what I've been saying over and over again for the past few minutes, and that is reaching out to talk to your Program Officer. One, talk to your colleagues. You probably have mentors that are around you. You want to kind of discuss your plan of action. You want to discuss your research goals, and you're also going to want to, as I said before, talk to a Program Officer so that you can kind of better understand how to make that decision for yourself. Really it's a decision that you're going to have to make after talking with the people that are important to your research career, like your Program Officer, like the individuals, your mentors that are around you, so that you can make a well-informed decision.

Megan Columbus: And I think so many of these questions that I'm seeing in this chat, you really need to have a conversation with somebody about your particular situation. And I know that we have an Ask A Training Officer booth, which is great. That booth is not accepting appointments, but go there throughout these 4 days. You can stop by any time the booth is staffed, and they can have a conversation that's offline with you where you can explain your

particular situation because that's going to be really important to do. Here's one from Fong, if you're a new investigator, is it required to have a published manuscript in the subject that you're applying for prior to applying for the R01?

Ericka Boone: It's .. I'll give you a very short answer on this one. It's probably a very good idea for you to have those published .. to have publications if you're applying for an R01. If you're in a position where you do not have those at the time, you're probably going to want to either apply for your smaller R01s or you might want to think about the career development award pathway in order to give yourself a little bit more time for development.

Megan Columbus: And there's been lots of questions about ESIs, and ESI eligibility, and the ability to extend ESIs because of COVID. And so, yes, you can extend your ESIs because of COVID, and you just need to submit the request, right?

Ericka Boone: Mm-hmm. And I was thinking .. We have a whole page that's devoted to ESI policies, and I want to put that into the chat feature for you all so that you can check out the myriad of programs and policies that are put in place specifically to assist early career investigators with the conduct of their research career. And COVID has been real for everyone, every single last one of us. And for some individuals it's really impacted the progression of their research. So if you think that you're in need of extending your ESI eligibility time frame, then make sure that you apply for an extension. And if you check out .. There's links on the ESI page that I just put into the chat there .. I hope that everyone sees that .. where you can find out how to apply for that utilizing your eRA Commons account.

Megan Columbus: And the other thing that page does is it tells you what types of awards will make you lose your ESI eligibility, right, what are those substantial awards that make you lose ESI eligibility. So I know that we have somebody asking about, does a K01 make them lose their eligibility? And the answer would be no. But you can go to that page. It'll tell you if you have any of these awards you're not eligible, okay?

Ericka Boone: And in the presentation as well I listed the examples of the grants where you are allowed to retain your ESI eligibility if you receive those grants. Most of them are Ks and Fs.

Megan Columbus: Great. I realize that it is 4:45 and I know, Dr. Boone, you're going to your next session right now. I do encourage everybody to go to these what we're calling after hours sessions because there's some really interesting ones today. Which session are you coming up on?

Ericka Boone: The UNITE Initiative here at NIH.

Megan Columbus: The UNITE Initiative here at NIH. And so that's all about kind of structural racism, and so I encourage everyone to attend. Thank you so much. Couple things, we'd love to hear your feedback on this session. It's right on the page which you used to get to this session. We will have this posted with 24 hours, the video posted within 24 hours, the presentation. And that video will include this Q and A.

Ericka Boone: Training booth. Training booth.

Megan Columbus: Yes. There is the training booth, and there's people across all the institutes who are ready and willing to take your questions. And so please go visit them because they're taking a lot of time out to be here for you. So don't be shy. Really we don't care if you don't know the answer, come and ask us because we want you to have those answers. Ericka Boone: And it's a lot less intimidating now to reach out in this kind of format as opposed to when we're not virtual or we're in person and you tell people, "Go and talk to a Program Officer," and they're like, "No." And I would literally walk people over to speak to someone, just because they were a little bit timid about doing so. But now that it's virtual I think it's a little less of an anxiety-provoking process.

Megan Columbus: Well, and you know what? And we're not scary. So anyway, thanks again, and thank you to you, Ericka, and enjoy the conference.

Ericka Boone: Goodbye.

Megan Columbus: Bye.